UpTime

The newsletter for: RS-DOS, OS9, OSK, CoCos, and 68xxx's.

Volume 1, Issue 3 November 1992

Editorial

Welcome to our newest issue! Unfortunately, we were only able to put in eight pages for this month, but this is only due to the lack of a few new advertisers which should be joining us in the next issue. All of the old column are here, and a special guest commentary, *The CoCo Market*, was submitted by Terry Simons from the Mid Iowa & Country CoCo Club. This is a national support club which puts out a newsletter during the fall, winter, and spring, and you can sign on to this newsletter as well as have access to their software library just by joining. If you would like more information, see their ad on page three.

Our software database idea is starting to take off with a few dealers already responding. Again I would like to emphasize, *we need your help* as well. If you have any information about any software products or "orphaneware", please let us know.

In closing, I would like to mention the two tentative upcoming

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The CoCo Market

The CoCo power, the market place- what happened? Where will it go from here?

In the beginning, during, and in the end, the CoCo was bought by us, the seekers and the thinkers. We love to seek and get excited when we find. We are not the majority. We will spend the time to experiment and learn for the thrill of discovery. Put it all together and you will find: the CoCo was marketed not for everyone; *it was marketed just for us!*

To better understand third party software sales or their lack thereof, first look at the early 80's CoCo buyer. While computers were being sold in popular department stores, this buyer went to an electronics store. This might tell you he is more of a technical- or hacker-type then the average Joe. Many like myself did not even consider software as a part of their computer at the time of purchase. Rather, it was purchased as a part of a new technology, to be played with. And many did not have a serious want to use software, but instead toy with it a bit and look at it. Do we wonder why they did not want to pay $30-$60 just for a look?

For many years Radio Shack salespeople were forbidden to mention third party support. Still we began to discover magazines which offered software and hardware.

Enter, the third party occupreneur, usually a person who was very adept at programming and the technical aspects of the CoCo, with little to no business and marketing experience.

But you did not really need it. Radio Shack only sold what someone on staff could throw together, which was poor at best. So if you could write something halfway decent and get together a few advertising dollars, you could become "McBig Soft" at your kitchen table. And many enjoyed the opportunity to become an instant occupreneur. Actually, the hobby in the den just grew to a hobby business of sorts or a great opportunity to sample what a business is all about. In 1985 through 1987, the CoCo was gaining popularity, with software relatively in short supply. Thus CoCoists were buying and trying just about everything. And there were those who had little conscience about taking and using the benefits of another person's effort without paying.

Experienced marketeers (of which the CoCo had very few) know every hobby has its saturation point. That point grew more evident in 1989 through 1991 as magazines, who to a large extent rely on software vendor's success, began folding, until we were left with Rainbow.

In actuality, most CoCo software companies were simply a hobbyist of extraordinary writing talent which turned into a kitchen table business. Big names like Cognetec (TeleWriter), Flexer

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UpTime

Editor: Jordan Tsvetkoff

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Purpose: To provide information about products, services, and activities relating to the **Tandy Color Computer** and **OSK/ 68xxx-based machines**.

Submissions: Submissions of any form can be sent to *UpTime Submissions*, **JWT Enterprises**, 5755 Lockwood Blvd., Youngstown, OH, 44512. Please note that article/editorial submissions are preferred, although short program listings will also be considered. If reimbusment is requested, please indicate in writing with the initial submission.

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AND TOWARDS THE FUTURE...

For the last two articles, I have shown the similarities and differences between some of the popular operating systems today. But exactly how does OS-9 work? What makes it so special in industry applications? And why does NASA trust it to run some of the critical systems on board the space shuttles?

By definition, OS-9 is a real time preemptive multitasking operating system; yes, quite a mouthful. Taking that apart into its "component parts", you have "real time", "preemptive multitasking", and "operating system". We have already talked about what an operating system is, which boils down to the software that controls the resources and devices used by any programs.

The *real time* part states that the operating system can interpret and work *reliably* with real world applications. For example, OS-9 might control a conveyor belt's speed as objects are passed in front of a drill. OS-9 must be

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Middle America's Fest
March 1992 (tentative)
Des Moines, Iowa

Sponsored by:
Mid Iowa & Country CoCo

Contact:
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1328 48th St.
Des Moines, IA 50311
(515) 279-2576

* * *

2nd Annual Last CoCoFest
May 1992 (tentative)
Chicago, IL

Details to be announced later

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OS-9 Quick Reference Guide Similar to CoCo BASIC QRG. Contains command syntax, screen codes, system calls, error codes.... much more! Perfect for beginners AND experienced OS-9ers! **Companion Disk** has all the popular patches from Delphi! Will AUTOMATICALLY patch OS-9 on a 512K 2 drive CoCo! OS-9QRG: **$7.95**
Disk: **$5.00** w/QRG, **$7.50** alone

Programming the 6809 by Zaks & Labiak. M/L programming - recommended by Motorola and Marty Goodman! 362 pages, 150 illustrations. **$22.95**

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912-328-7859 **Add $1.50 S&H (GA add 5% tax)**

Future cont'd from page 2

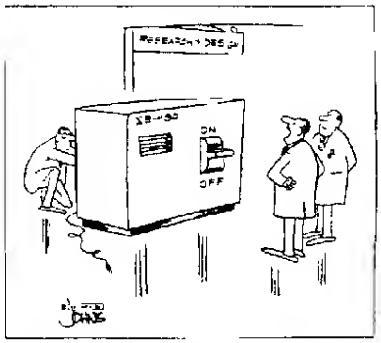
able to process the location of the object and adjust the speed of the belt within certain time and distance tolerances or the drill will bore a hole in the wrong place. OS-9 accomplishes this with an elaborate *interrupt* and *signaling* scheme which I will try to get to in a future article.

Preemptive multitasking means that the operating system will give control of the processor to the various programs that are executing at any one time and give control only for a certain period of time. At that point the OS-9 kernel will take away control from the program (or *process* as it is called) and move on to the next process waiting in the execution *queue* (which is an ordered list of the processes which would really like to be executed at some point or another). Since the kernel has the power to take away control at any time, it can effectively implement the "real time" aspect in that a special *event* can be given top priority if necessary.

There are quite a few new terms above, such as process, queue, and event. Try to understand exactly what each of these terms mean in an OS-9 environment. RS-DOS, which most people are familiar with, is an extremely simple operating system in the sense that only one program can run at any one time, eliminating the need for the concept of a process or execution queue. RS-DOS has a limited ability to process events by setting up interrupts that actually interrupt a program and execute a special section of code when the interrupt occurs. However, RS-DOS itself does not really use any of these interrupts, so a program must set them up before it can take advantage of them.

Next month I want to spend some time discussing how OS-9 allocates memory and works with its *modules*.

-Jordan Tsvetkoff



"Well, let's see if the front office thinks this one is simple enough to operate!"

UPGRADE National Diskletter! From: Mid Iowa & Country CoCo
We are a national reachout!

Our "UPGRADE" newsletter mailed on Disk, has become a real hit with MAX III graphics accompaning articles. The articles from RSDOS Basic programming, and hardware, to OS-9 by James Jones of Microware; dump to screen (TV, Mono, or RGB) or printer. Sometimes with the news before the big mags, and editorials you will not see in the commercial magazine. With many user tips and ideas.

Our Power Packed Domain Library: is purposly small relative to thousands available; because the few hundred disks there are carefully selected as "The Best Available"! Public Domain, Shareware, OS-9, & previously big named Orphaneware programs.

We also have a "Christian Software Sub-chapter". Which simply offers Christian oriented software and listings for those interested.

Where can you buy? Or sell that equipment you've just upgraded from? Your free ads will be in the middle of the community.

Be in touch for Middle America's Fest '93 in Des Moines, IA.

Have you noticed the 3rd part market producers (i.e. support) dropping like flies in late fall? The shrinking Rainbow? The support of your CoCo is rapidly being left up to YOU! As third party decreases; belonging to a CoCo group is your only support. Radio Shack and a long list of magazines have folded it in. If one more magazine folds,,, where will you look next month?

Our eight year record speaks very well to reaching out and serving members. A strong treasury assures confidence of delivery. Most members are out of town or out of state! Presently we have paid memberships in 23+ states and 3 provinces of Canada. Plus five clubs, and some dealers. Out 90% renewal rate says most all feel MI&CC is very worthwhile. Join up and see why: even user groups by vote; sign up with a paid membership!

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NINE TIMES

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RAINBOW

Foreign postage excludes U.S. Territories and Canada. These products for OS-9 Level 2 on the CoCo 3. Sorry, no C.O.D.'s or credit cards; Foreign & Canadian orders, *please* use U.S. money orders. U.S. checks, allow 4 weeks for receipt of order. Ohio residents, please add 6% sales tax.

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CoCo Market cont'd from page 1

(ADOS 2 & 3), and Van der Poel made big money. Yet none of the people gave up their daytime job. Of course not, as it was always a hobby.

Anyone trying to understand the CoCo third party market in a serious business-like manner will only find themselves confused. 80%+ were there by the vacuum created by Radio Shack's limited marketing of an inexpensive yet powerful computer. For the most part, the CoCo software industry was merely an extension of someone's hobby and not a real business at all.

There should be nothing belittling about the fact that these were hobby businesses. Many hard earned and serious dollars were poured into this pie. And some of the losses were not so sweet. I think it is great to see John Q. Average get an opportunity to experience his own business. I am sure it was a fun and educational experience for many.

I doubt if many overnight occupreneurs even realized this themselves. And they made a bundle out of what began as a hobby. They took it seriously; their success went to their head, and they stomped off, leaving software rights to neither shareware or another vendor. Burring your accomplishments is a very poor epitaph.

The CoCo future? The lack of a serious software market has meant there are a lot of sophisticated capabilities that were not and will not be developed. And in reality Radio Shack has never supported the CoCo. None of this stopped it then, nor will it stop the CoCo now. Third party support will without doubt grow smaller. Yet we still have and will continue with excellent programmers. Anyone who even thinks thousands of $500+ systems are going to be thrown away is nuts.

The bottom line of the CoCo's future has already been decided, not by me or any individual, but by the many whom I have heard say, "I enjoy and use my CoCo. I don't want to spend a lot of money on something else when the CoCo does all I need. And I will continue using my CoCo!"

- Terry Simons

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WPShel - This is an impressive tool which allows those who do a lot of Word Processing on their Color Computer 3 to put all of their favorite tools under a single point and click environment. Requires OS-9 Level 2, system support from the *WindInt* module which comes with *Multi-Vue* and at least 256K of memory. Mouse and Printer are optional but desirous. Only **$22.00!!**

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CoCo Classified Ads

HARDWARE

CoCo 3 512K, Multipac (upgraded pal); Disto controller with RS232 port-parallel printer port-SCSI port-eprom burner; Burke & Burke hard drive interface; 10 meg MFM (IBM compatable) hard drive; composite monitor; 2 double sided (IBM compatable) floppy drive; deluxe joystick; and over 200 software packages including EDTASM; OS9II; PBBS6.0; OS9 BBS program setup and functioning on hard drive; games and more. Want to sell as package. Asking $800.00. Call Robert at (608) 735-4847.

Have to sell, Tandy disk drives, CM-8 monitor, and a 4-slot Multipak. Call (308) 762-1421 from 7-9 PM MST

SOFTWARE

Quest for Thelda (coco 3), $30.00; Micro-painter, Big Bird's special delivery, Cookie monster letter crunch, $5.00 ea.; Sam Sleuth, Scripsit-2, Thexder, Pitfall-2 (disk), Synther 77, $3.00 ea.; All include instructions. Call (717) 235-0887 or write to David Call, 7 Cardinal Dr., Glen Rock PA, 17327.

WANTED TO BUY

Looking for Text adventure games, especially Infocom games: Planetfall; Enchanter & Ballyhoo. Willing to Buy or Trade. Write or call Doug Vaughan, Space 385 3015 E. Bayshore Rd., Redwood City CA 94063, (415) 365-1719

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WTB Rainbow on Disk up to December 1988. Also, old CoCo magazines excluding Rainbow. Quote prices and write: James Kelly, P.O. Box 3244, Astoria, NY 11103

Your ad, offering to buy or sell CoCo hardware and software, could appear here and be read by well over 500 active CoCo users. For details, see below.

GENERAL

HOMEOWNERS: Save tens or hundreds of thousands of **$$** on your mortgage, using techniques that banks will wish you didn't know! We'll prepare a customized report for you, outlining your current mortgage, along with five curtailment strategies and the resultant savings! Also, we can optionally set up automated payment thru a fully insured FDIC trust that will make your mortgage payment on time, every time...with no effort on your part! Results from following our strategies are **guaranteed** or your money back. Fee is $59. To apply, send $10 application fee (credited toward purchase), to: DNM Research, PO Box 763, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, or call (313) 481-3283.

PLACING YOUR AD

To place an ad, simply print out your ad copy, specify which classification you wish it placed under, and send it to **CoCoPRO! Attn: Classifieds, PO Box 763, Ypsilanti, MI 48198** along with your name, address, phone number, & payment. We reserve the right to refuse any ad we deem inappropriate (such as offers to trade commercial software, vendor ads, etc.). Cost for an ad is $5 for 1st 20 words, $3 for each additional 20 or portion thereof. Ad deadline is the 25th of each month for publication in the following month's issue. Ad copy will not be taken by phone. Neither CoCoPress Classifieds, UpTime, nor their sponsors shall be held responsible for any transactions that take place in the Classified section.

Who says that there's nothing new for OS-9 Level 2?

Check these out!!

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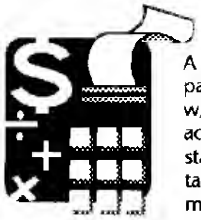

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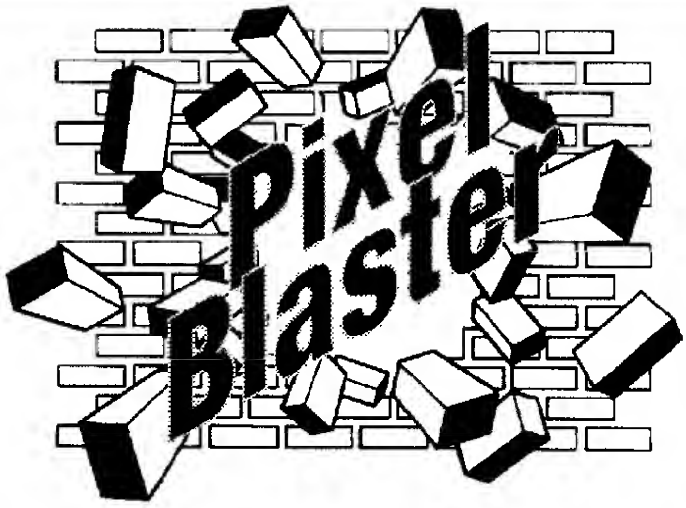
Special! only $34.95!

Tools 3! An **all-new** set of 24 useful utils for OS-9! Includes **filehandling** utils (such as enhanced copy commands and filefinding), **OS extensions** (such as the ability to do "lightning"-fast backups in one pass, and password protection for any file), **module generating** utils (create modules without an assembler), **point & click** utils, and many more. As a special bonus, we include the **OS9 Oscilloscope!** Req. OS9 lv 2, some utils require 512k.

24 useful utilities for only $29.95!



Announcing **Pixel Blaster** - a high speed, versatile graphics and animation library for OS-9. Written in 100% efficient assembly-language, **Pixel Blaster** delivers lightning-fast action through incredible functions, designed for fast graphics manipulation. And, with the included BASIC09 interface and C library, you can now incorporate sophisticated animation techniques (even 3-D!) into your own programs easily, whether or not you program in ML!

Now, there's no need to view RSDOS assembly as the only option for creating high-speed action games. If you can program in BASIC09, C, or OS-9 assembly, you can use **Pixel Blaster** to get the action and speed you want, ***under OS-9!*** Requires OS-9 Level 2.

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Bonus thru Nov. 30: Buy any 4 software products below at the listed price, and choose another one FREE! The lowest-priced product of the four is our gift. You must mention this special *UpTime* offer when ordering to recieve this special offer.

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OS-9 SOFTWARE

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The Contras

Once upon a time, Sundog Systems announced a new 512k game called *The Contras*. It took two years and three programmers to complete this, the most ambitious game ever created for the CoCo-3. Jeff Steidl, accomplished author of *Photon* and *GrafExpress 2.0*, led the effort to produce this technological marvel. In doing so, he proved that the CoCo can match –or surpass– any home game system.

The Contras features a two-player cooperative mode, 512k filled with incredible graphics, super-smooth animation and scrolling, an outstanding background music score, sizzling sound effects, and lightning-fast arcade action.

This is paramilitary combat at its best. Play alone or with a friend as you take on the evil alien invaders. Blow away the enemy while travelling thru multiple levels and powering up with ever more destructive weapons. *The Contras* will keep you playing for hours; it is quite possibly the best CoCo game ever! Requires 512k CoCo-3, disk drive, & joystick. **Shipping November 10! Order now for fastest delivery!**

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Editorial cont'd from page 1

shows: the Mid Iowa & Country CoCo show in Iowa scheduled for March, 1993, and the 2nd Annual Last CoCo Fest scheduled in Chicago, Illinois, for May, 1993. These shows really show a great amount of support in the way of dealer turnout, and if you would like to see firsthand some of the products and the faces behind those products, these shows are a great opportunity to do just that.

-Jordan Tsvetkoff

PIPELINE

Kala Software announced a new release of the **UltiMuse** package for OSK systems. Version 10 now includes the ability to use *MIDI Events*, which allow you to change patches [sounds] on a synthesizer during playback. The OS-9 version (4.8.0) will soon be upgraded to 4.9.0 and will also include *MIDI Events*. The next major update, version 5.0, will include the cut/copy/paste capability, which is accessed through "merge" and "append" in the program. This facility will allow you to easily transfer bits and pieces of music between files without rescoring the song. This would also allow you to import premade sequences (such as drum patterns and chorus lines) to easily build songs. Mike Knudson is the driving (and programming) force behind **UltiMuse**, and his groundbreaking memory management tricks under OS-9 have even made their way to Microware. *Kala Software, 3801 Brown Bark Drive, Greensboro, NC, 27410, (919) 294-1558.*

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